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FOREST ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF THE PROVINCE OF BOMBAY FOR THE YEAR 1939-40.

CHAPTER I.

CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

(1) ALTERATION IN AREAS.

Afforestations and disforestmments during the year resulted in a net reduction of 3 square miles in the reserved forests in charge of the Forest Department and 14 square miles in the forests in charge of the Revenue Department. The areas at the end of the year stood at 10,566 and 1,617 square miles respectively. Similarly, the protected forests in charge of the Revenue Department decreased by 16 square miles to 594 square miles, those in charge of the Forest Department remaining unaltered at 160 square miles.

The disforestmments were chiefly in favour of cultivation in Thana, West Khandesh, Poona, Belgaum and Dharwar-Bijapur. In spite of these large areas given out for cultivation, the hunger for land for this purpose is on the increase particularly in the Panch Mahals and Khandesh Divisions and the Gokak and Gujnal ranges of the Belgaum division where much land cannot usually be given unless the areas more suitable for growing timber and fuel and for grazing are reduced considerably causing thereby other grievances.

Besides these, territorial changes occurred in the Central and Southern Circles. In the former, consequent on the formation of an independent Sub-Division in West Khandesh, the Shirpur ranges which were transferred to East Khandesh on the abolition of the North Khandesh Division were added to the West Khandesh Division and the Chalisgaon range was retransferred to the East Khandesh Division. Similarly, the Supa range, which formed part of the Kanara Northern Division, was transferred to the Belgaum Division.

(2) FOREST SETTLEMENTS.

The total area of reserved forest pending settlement at the commencement of the year was 1 square mile and 471 acres to which 1 square mile and 243 acres were added during the year. Out of this area only 239 acres were finally settled, the cost on this account being Rs. 28.

As stated in the last year's report the work of acquiring first class survey numbers within the forest demarcation line in the Satara Sub-Division has been held in abeyance, while in the Poona Division, an area of 786 acres and 15 gunthas was acquired during the year at a cost of Rs. 29,984.

(3) DEMARCATION.

One mile of new boundaries was demarcated artificially in the Southern Circle at a cost of Rs. 10 and 22,089 miles of existing boundaries (including those between British territory and Goa, Mysore and Bhor) were repaired at a cost of Rs. 4,872.

The boundary between British territory and the Baroda State was finally settled. The cleared fire line in Deomogra has been fixed as the inter-state boundary and an area of about 50 acres has been ceded to the Baroda State by way of compensation for the land included in British territory as a result of the readjustment.

(4) FOREST SURVEYS.

An area of 5.64 square miles in the Satara Sub-Division and 109.49 square miles in the Belgaum Division was resurveyed by the Survey of India Department during the year. The actual survey work done last year in the Dharwar-Bijapur Division was 141 square miles including the 2 square miles shown in the last year's report. These details were received late after the submission of the report and therefore could not be included in it.

The total expenditure on the constitution of State forests during the year was Rs. 34,866.

CHAPTER II.

MANAGEMENT OF STATE FORESTS.

1. REGULATION OF MANAGEMENT.

Preparation and Control of Working Plans.*(a) Preparation of Working Plans.*

Efficient management of forests is achieved only when exploitation, conservation and regeneration go hand in hand and to this end exploitation, regeneration and conservation are attempted by means of working plans.

The progress made in the preparation of working plans during the year is summarised below :—

(1) The revised working plan for the Panch Mahals forests was sanctioned by Government.

(2) The working plan for the Thana Gurcharans has been submitted to Government.

(3) As stated in the last year's report the provisions of Part II of the South Tapti Working Plan for the West Khandesh forests are being followed. The operation of Part III of the plan has however been suspended pending the result of the experiments in rotational grazing